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Hello there

[image]

Hey. Wassup. This is a hekkin old book fam. I honestly don't even read Warriors anymore. Most of the chapters are under 1000 words and I literally didnt plan anything at all. It's been at least three years since I even looked at this book tbh.

Anyway, if you still wanna read it, go ahead. You guys are always askin me to update it because it was taken down for awhile because I wanted to edit it, but like... I'm a junior in high school now. Aint nobody got time for that. Soo yeah

I put up all the chapters again but I havent even touched them. They're still first drafts lol. Most of them are less than 500 words. But it's still okay I guess. Coulda been executed better but what can I say, I was in middle school mdudes □□♀□🧢

Soooooooooooo yep imma stop now. Enjoy this book i suppose

Prologue

TO ALL OF YOU WHO ARE PLANNING ON PUTTING A HURTFUL COMMENT IN THE COMMENTS BAR, PLEASE THINK THROUGH THIS FIRST:

1- Is this book/concept hurting me in any physical way?
2- Am I being forced by the author to read this book?
3- Will putting a hurtful comment on this book fix or change anything?

If you answered no to any of those, then you should be aware that hurtful comments on this or ANY book are not ever necessary. If you do not like this book, don't read it. But you don't need to put a hurtful comment down, because it is never tolderated by me. If this tolerance is broken I will not hesitate to mute and delete. Thank you for reading this, and I hope you enjoy my story. ♥

A cat, belly heavy and exposed with kits stepped out of the shadows, heaving herself away from the fox, who was growling and spitting, as if desperate for its next leaf-bare meal. She let out a groan as she collapsed in a sheltered bush, bleeding heavily from scratches and wounds. It was obvious she had been attacked, and was near death to say the least. A big slit in her belly shifted long after she breathed her last breath, and two tiny, mewling she-kits tumbled out of the wound, barely breathing. They had miraculously broken their own birthing sacs, and somehow found their way out into the open world through the large hole in their mothers belly.

A cat padded through the open hedge, nearly tripping over the body of the dead mother. "Oh my!" She exclaimed, and looked at the two

kits. She looked to the sky, her eyes cast towards the last wispy pink strands of dawn that were just disappearing with the twinkling starry night. It was almost as if the she cat were looking for guidance. After a moment, she looked back down at the kits.

"She looks just like Dawnkit..." The she cat whispered, and, as if she suddenly felt the guidance she was seeking, picked up the two kits and trotted off. "I'm going to take care of you, Dawnkit and Morningkit," she said gently through their scruffs. The touching scene was enough to warm the hearts of anyone, the two mewling kits being given a chance at new life, being given a new mother, a family.

They padded through the woods, and she suddenly stopped. There was a flaming star, falling in the lightening morning sky. She watched in awe, as it fell, and stormy clouds covered the otherwise perfect sky. The star fell, and set the forest ablaze before her, while the pond animals near her started splashing violently. She looked around in panic, seeing a lemur giving a screeching warning call and running to the edge of the pool.

To her astonishment, a strange calico turtle stood by the side of the lemur, and together they splashed in the pond, whooping and screeching until, miraculously, the fire went out. The cat gasped as a low voice sounded.

"The ringed tail and the dappled turtle will join forces to deliver us from the morning star," it said, and then the blaze vanished.

The whole scene lasted no more than a heartbeat, but it was enough to frighten the she cat. She set the two kits down, and looked them in the eye.

"Who are you?" She whispered, nearly silently, her tailtip flicking ever so gently. She glanced around, putting the two kits on her back, and padding back over to their mother. She touched her nose to the mother's flank briefly, and murmured something softly, before she covered the still bleeding body with leaves and turned around.

"Let's take you home," she told the two kittens, trotting back

towards the way she had come.

"Let's take you home."

Allegiances

DewClan
•~•~•~•~•~•~•~•~•~•~•~•~•~•~•~•~•~•~•

Leader- Aquastar- white fluffy she cat with dark red and brown splotches up her back.

Deputy- Redstrike- strong pure white tom with one crimson red paw, which he always uses to strike. Mentor to Wrinklepaw

MC- Poppystem- gentle calico she cat

MCA- Nightgaze- grey tabby tom with blind blue eyes

Warriors-

Creekjay- light grey she cat with a sweet meow

Violetgaze- pale cream she cat with violet eyes. Mentor to Camelpaw

Treevice- caramel colored tom

Ryeflight- tan tom with green eyes. Mentor to Venompaw

Firegaze- white tom with fire yellow eyes

Thistleshine- grey tom with spiky fur

Snowtip- black and white she cat with a white tail tip

Apprentices-

Wrinklepaw- white hairless tom with green eyes

Camelpaw- tan grey she cat

Venompaw- shy she cat with long sharp claws that she rarely uses because she thinks its impolite

Queens-

Spottedfern- spotted hairless she cat. Mates with Thistleshine

Aquastar- white fluffy she cat with dark red and brown splotches up her back. Nursing Dawnkit, Morningkit, and Splashkit

Kits-

Dawnkit- small fluffy creme she cat

Morningkit- orange tabby she cat with blue eyes

Splashkit- shy black and white tom, smaller than his littermates

Chapter 1

"Can't catch me!" Splashkit heard his sister, Dawnkit cry. He just stayed near his mother, not bothering to try to open his eyes. He was three moons old, and his siblings were growing and thriving, but Splashkit still didn't want to open his eyes.

He was the runt of the litter, the only surviving biological kit of his mother, Aquastar. His sister biologically, Dawnkit was the stronger one, and had caught a cold and died in the last week of leafbare. When his mother had found out, she spend all day scouting the forest, heartbroken.

But when she had returned, she had found two kits in the forest, their mother killed by a fox. She brought them home, saying that one of them looked just like her dead daughter. The current Dawnkit held the name of Splashkit's real sister, because they looked so alike, they could have been twins.

"Grr! I'm a big scary warrior! I'm gonna sneak up on the fox den!" Morningkit growled, snapping Splashkit from his thoughts. *"Rawr!"*

Splashkit pricked his ears as his mother, Aquastar shifted, ruining his perfect position, nestled in between her belly and her head. He scowled as his mother spoke. "Now, Morningkit don't-"

Crash!

"*Morningkit!* Didn't I tell you not to go into the medicine den? Get out, *now*!" His mother scolded, getting up with a mumble. Splashkit was grumpy for a moment too; Morningkit had made his mother leave the nest, and it had made him cold! "I swear StarClan has cursed me with this kit..." Splashkit gave a tiny laugh.

I would give anything to see the look on her face! He though with a laugh, and then realized something. *I can, I can!* He cried silently, grinning broadly. Peeking open one crystal blue eye, he saw his sister, an orange tabby, pouting as she was escorted back to the

nursery. He laughed again. *Maybe I can greet her? After all, we never have really met...* He pondered, and, after some thought, decided it was a great idea.

He got up on wobbly paws, stumbling around to get the feel for walking. Then he broke into a clumsy trot, then a run. He came up behind Morningkit. "Hi Morningkit! Look, look!! I opened my eyes!" He cried, puffing out his tiny chest happily. Morningkit gave a bored look, ignoring him and turning back to her sister with an upturned nose and a disgusted expression.

Splashkit didn't understand. *Maybe she didn't hear me?* Standing on his tip-toes, he poked her with a tiny claw. "Hey, Morningkit, look at me!" He said again, squeaking indignantly, but she carried on ignoring him, chatting like a starling to Dawnkit, his sister. Dawnkit gave an uncomfortable look, squirming out of Splashkit's viewpoint as if she were embarrassed. "Hey!" He cried again, trying to get the two sisters' attention.

"Oh my StarClan, Dawnkit! I just had a *fantabulous* idea! Lets go stalk the big warriors!" Morningkit whispered in a high-pitched squeak. Dawnkit shuffled her paws. Before Dawnkit could reply, she sneered and whispered something in her ear. "It's *way* better than being stuck in this stinkhole. Maybe we should sneak out of camp!"

Dawnkit glanced at Splashkit for a split second, her ears flat in anxiety. "Uhm, Morningkit, Aquastar said not to-" her sister cut off Dawnkit's careful reminder with a rude scoff and a slap to her sister's nose.

"Who cares?! She isn't even our real mother, you know that!" Morningkit scoffed, shoving her sister. "What's the *worst* that could happen?" Dawnkit looked hurt, but Splashkit thought otherwise. It looked like Morningkit was playing with Dawnkit!

Splashkit's ears pricked. *A game!* He went up in front of his sisters. Looking up to their heads, he tilted his own head back to speak to them. "Can I play, too? I'm a good fighter! Just watch me, rawr!" He punched an imaginary enemy on wobbly paws before falling flat on his face and earning a laugh from Morningkit.

Dawnkit smiled warmly, her fluffy creme pelt shining. "Sure, Splashkit! What's not to like about you?" She purred, helping Splashkit up. But her sister stopped her, and shoved him back down in the dirt again, wrinkling her nose delicately.

"Ew, no! Not the *runt!"* She said, turning up her nose and curling her lip as if Splashkit were a piece of crowfood. "He needs to stay near his *mommy*," she said in a mock whine, taking up a paw to tickle his nose mockingly. "Right Dawnkit?"

Dawnkit looked from her sister to Splashkit, her eyes seeming to survey him as he crouched down, his ears flat but his eyes hopeful. Dawnkit would stand up for him, right? Then Dawnkit finally looked to her paws and took a deep breath. Looking up, she had a mean sneer on her face, that she was struggling to keep on.

"Yeah! Go away, badger-paws!" She said, pushing him over and walking away, both sisters laughing their head off. At the last second, while Splashkit dusted himself off, he saw Dawnkit look back, her face dripping with guilt before Morningkit lead her away.

Chapter 2

Splashkit padded back and fourth around the outside of the nursery, pacing relentlessly. Aquastar had ushered the kits out at nearly moonhigh, because Spottedfern was kitting a moon early. Morningkit and Dawnkit were complaining about how they had been woken from their beauty slumber, while Splashkit paced with worry, wide awake. He droned out the whines of his sisters while he nearly panicked.

"Ugh. Why does Spottedfern have to be kitting *now?* In the middle of the night? I swear, it's like she *chose* to annoy us." Morningkit groaned, complaining relentlessly.

Dawnkit nodded silently, earning both of them a scolding from Aquastar. Splashkit would have listened, if he could keep his mind from wondering.

What if the kits didn't live? What if Spottedfern died? She was one of the kindest queens he had met, and he couldn't bear the thought of her not being here. What if the kits were small and got bullied like him? That was even worse. He would never let these kits be hurt by Morningkit. There were endless possibilities.

He heard groans and quiet whimpers, and Thistleshine, who was pacing next to him, finally sat down, and started bouncing his paws, fidgeting in worry. He had nearly tied his tail in knots by now! After a moment, he jumped as Poppystem's head popped out of the den, her face beaming broadly. "Three healthy kits, Thistleshine. Congratulations!" She announced, and Poppystem barely had time to scramble out of the entrance before Thistleshine had began pushing his way into it. Splashkit wanted to see as well, his tail flicking. He looked at his mother for permission, and she smiled, so he gave a crow of delight. Poppystem looked uncomfortable, and called after Thistleshine. "Wait-" She ducked into the den after him, her tail disappearing. Splashkit followed.

Spottedfern and Thistleshine were purring, tails interlocked. They

were stroking their three kits, one a dust colored hairless tom, another was a grey tabby tom just like his father. But the one that caught his eye was the last she kit, a beautiful orange tabby, bright as the sun.

Thistleshine licked the tabby, right over her forehead. A tuft of fur that fell over her left eye shifted, and revealed.... Nothing. Thistleshine glanced at Poppystem. "Where's her eye?" His tone wasn't at all angry, just curious, like any father would be. Poppystem sighed and dipped her head.

"I don't know why, but she never developed a second eye. It's nothing, just a hollow hole behind her lid." Poppystem smiled. "But she is perfectly healthy." Thistleshine nodded, and nuzzled his mate lovingly.

"What are their names?" Splashkit asked politely after Poppystem had cleared out. He asked for them all, but he was really only interested in knowing the she-kits name.

Spottedfern purred. "The hairless one is Dustykit. The grey tom is Fallingkit, and the she kit is Brightkit," she said slowly, pausing between each name gingerly.

Brightkit. What a perfect name... Sppashkit felt his cheeks blush, as he stared at the perfect kit.

He purred. "Pretty names, Spottedfern," he said to the calico queen. "I can't wait to play!" He crouched in a playful hunters crouch, and he was poked in the rump by sharp claws. "Owie!"

He turned to see Morningkit, a perfect sneer on her delicate face. "Psst, Splashkit!" She whispered. He ignored her. *All that will come out of this will be hurt.* "Psst! Psst!" She said again, poking him harder. "*Psst!!*"

Splashkit finally turned, knowing she wouldn't leave him alone. "What, Morningkit?" He huffed, annoyed. Morningkit rolled her eyes, flicking her tail to signal him to follow.

"Hurry up, bird brain." She muttered under her breath as Splashkit

struggled over the brambles to leave the nursery. He tumbled flat on his face as he left, and got up swiftly, hoping Morningkit hadn't noticed.

Sh led him towards the back of the nursery, flicking her tail impatiently when he stopped hesitantly. She scoffed and faced her back to him, waiting for Splashkit to catch up. He finally made t to her side, and sat down, panting.

Morningkit turned around suddenly, unsheathing a claw to slash his face mockingly. Splashkit shrank back, holding a paw to his now bleeding nose in shock and hurt. Morningkit grinned, showing her teeth.

"Aw, little Spwashkit has a cwush," she said in a baby voice. She spat in his eyes. "Ha! She's the most pathetic cat on earth! Can't you choose someone more, I don't know, *normal?"* Morningkit paused for a heartbeat, as if pretending to ponder it. "Oh wait, you can't, because you aren't even normal yourself! You're the perfect match!" She said, ending in a high-pitched voice, her eyes shining with triumph when Splashkit showed the hurt on his face. She shoved him down, and put her nose in his face.

"You don't deserve anyone's love," she growled, her blue eyes stony with hatred. They cut into Splashkit's own fearful ones like daggers, before she turned around, whacking him in the face with her tail before she left Splashkit alone in the dust, to clean his bleeding face and cry.

Chapter 3

Splashkit slept outside the rest of the night, listening to the rain as he laid under a meager leaf. His tears had long since dried, and he had lost the energy to feel sorry for himself after about two heartbeats. He watched the sun rose that morning, before he got up to pad back to the nursery. Shaking his pelt of the morning dew that had settled between his fur, he paused as he heard his sister complaining.

"Splashkit clawed my face on purpose!" Morningkit was whining to Aquastar, her lips puckered to a pout. "He pinned me and I had no choice to defend myself and claw back!" She held up a paw to point to a deep cut in her face. "He said he hated me because we wern't really siblings!" Splashkit growled and saw she was hiding a smile, and though her eyes were wet, they wern't red. *She must have made Dawnkit claw her, and put water in her eyes like tears.* He burst in, holding back a growl and his glinting claws that wanted to badly to rip her face for real this time. He was *tired* of Morningkit! He was *tired* of her lies and taunts. He just wanted her to *stop!*

"You meanie! You liar!" He cried, trying to leap up on top of his sister, who was much larger than the tiny tom. His short legs barely reached over her shoulders, and Morningkit just stood above him, staring at him with a hint of amusement on her face. It quickly vanished, as she tried to keep up her convincing act. "I never said that and you know it!" Splashkit protested.

Morningkit backed away, her eyes wide. She put fear in her gaze, flattening her ears. *You're so dumb, Splashkit,* He could just imagine what she was saying to him in her head. *Why don't you just die like your sister did?* Splashkit arched his tiny back and hissed, baring his teeth until he felt his mother's bellows of rage through vibrations in his paw pads, and he stopped, hanging his head sheepishly when he realized what he had done.

"Splashkit, Morningkit, *enough!!!"* Aquastar bellowed furiously. Her eyes were thorns, and she stared back and fourth between each kit.

Dawnkit watched silently from behind a nest, her ears flat in surprise. Splashkit gasped in shock and guilt, lowering his head in shame.

"Mama, I never-" he was cut off by Morningkit's angry glare, promising to make his life miserable if he told Aquastar what really happened. Knowing she wouldn't hesitate to go through with the silent threat, he looked at his paws and sighed.

"Splashkit, you should be very ashamed of your actions just now," she scolded Splashkit. "You attacked your sister! When has it *ever* been okay to do so?" Splashkit opened his mouth to protest, but his mother flicked her tail. "You and Morningkit need to sort yourselves out." She lifted her chin. "You will each clean your own nest *together* for the rest of your kithood, and you will also be confined to the nursery *together* for a half a moon," she declared.

Morningkit looked at her mother in surprise. "But I didn't do anything! *He* attacked *me!"* Splashkit was also very surprised. He had never clawed Morningkit! She had made everything up! Then he remembered. *I just tackled her.* He thought, and sighed miserably. *So much for proving her wrong.*

His mother gave Morningkit a hard stare, challenging her protest. "I object." She growled. She pointed to the claw mark on Morningkit's nose, and raised an eyebrow. "You lied to your mother *and* leader." Morningkit pouted, and shot a glare at Splashkit, sticking out her tongue. "Now, each of you say you're sorry," Aquastar ordered, cuffing Morningkit over the ears after she made a face at Splashkit.

Morningkit stuck out her bottom lip and pouted, her tail lashing as she turned to Splashkit. "Sorry," she mumbled. Then, when Aquastar wasn't looking, she added, "Just for the record... You'll be clearing my dirt too." She scoffed, tipping his head down to his chest and stalking away before he had a chance to apologize.

Splashkit sighed dejectedly, tears threatening to fall down his face again as he gave a sniff. Curling up in his nest, he buried himself in to moss, and fell asleep. When he woke, he saw a bubbly one-eyed face staring him in the eye. "Hi!" Brightkit chimed energetically.

Splashkit returned with a gloomy, "Hi," and curled up in the opposing direction. Brightkit tipped her head to one side, and her eye suddenly grew serious.

"You know, I don't think Morningkit is very nice..." She said. This made Splashkit smile a bit, and he gave a tiny purr.

"Thanks, Brightkit... You have no idea how much that helped..." He said quietly. Brightkit smiled back and curled around him comfortingly, and soon Splashkit had closed his eyes, and was snoring softly.

Chapter 4

Splashkit watched, feeling rejected and alone as Morningkit left Splashkit behind to finish clearing her nest while she snuck back out of the nursery prison yet again, meeting up with Dawnkit, Fallingkit, and Dustykit. The bigger kits. The *normal* kits. He sighed. He was never going to be good enough to matter, and he knew it. Morningkit made sure of that. His eyes followed them laughing and giggling, playing, and having a blast, while he cleared both Morningkit's and his own nest.

What I wouln't give to be bigger... He thought gloomily as he watched them. His paws gathered up the dirty moss, and he wished his mother was there to help him. But Aquastar was out on an investigation patrol on the borders, and all the other kits were outside playing. They pounced on each other, goofing off. Then the two older kits flicked their tails, beckoning Fallingkit to her.

Without warning, Morningkit and Dawnkit broke the suspicious huddle; Fallingkit ran off, and so did Dawnkit. Splashkit saw Morningkit press her claw into her paw pad and smile at the others as a bead of crimson blood dropped into the dirt. The rest of the kits had come back with something, and they hunched together, forming a plan. Splashkit watched with interest. What was happening?

Fallingkit tied his item- a long, spindly vine- to Dawnkit's gift, a bundle of marigold. Then Morningkit padded up to Poppystem's apprentice, Nightgaze. The blind grey tom was sorting herbs. Splashkit strained to hear her wail.

"Nightgaze, I stepped on a thistle, and I need marigold," she complained loudly, holding back a giggle. She made eye contact with Dawnkit, who was holding the marigold tied to the string in her jaws. Splashkit groaned as he realized what they were planning to do to the grumpy, blind tom. *The mousebrains! Nightgaze'll murder them!*

Nightgaze smiled. "Alright. I just gave Dawnkit some, Dawnkit?" He raised his voice to call Morningkit's biological sister. Splashkit watched Dawnkit suspiciously as she nodded, carrying the bundle of marigold connected to the vine and smiling innocently, even though Nightgaze couldn't see her. *Don't do it, Dawnkit. Its not right.* He thought tensely, tail flicking.

"Here Nightgaze," she offered sweetly, and a groan erupted in Splashkits throat. He could almost taste the honey of innocence in her voice. Time seemed to move slower as he watched Morningkit suppress giggles. As the blind tom reached down to grab the herb, Morningkit tugged it away with the vine and all three of the kits burst into peals of mocking laughter as Nightgaze came up with nothing, looking baffled and embarrassed. He reached down again, slower this time, but just as his teeth began to close around the herbs Morningkit tugged it away once more, yanking it out of his jaw. Splashkit grimaced as he saw the medicine cat apprentice's ears flatten and his fur rise when he realized what the kits had done, and Splashkit knew the kits were in big trouble.

They deserve it, Splashkit thought to himself as he watched Nightgaze open his mouth to yell at the kits. Silently cheering the grumpy tom on in his head, suddenly Splashkits ears perked with interest; he wanted to see Morningkit punished this time. But much to Splashkit's disappointment, Nightgaze stopped mid-breath and pricked his ears, while Splashkit did the same.

Thrumming paws echoed in the camp entrance. *Uh oh... Here comes mamas patrol!* He thought, diving under his own half-cleaned nest. His mother had led an investigation patrol to sniff some feathers and blood near the border this morning that the Clan suspected was from rouges. It was already sunhigh. Rouges had never really given them much trouble, but today was different.

The strange muddy scent of the rouges hit Splashkit first, and his eyes widened when ge realized the scent carried nothing of his mother or her patrol. He shrank back, his ears now flat.

Splashkit peeked out of the nursery to see Brightkit obliviously patting some tiny flowers near the entrance. She seemed to be completely engrossed in how delicate they were, and didn't realize

that she was about to be stampeded. Splashkit gulped fearfully, his voice leaving him. He wanted to call out to her. *No!* Looking around, he gulped even harder. *I can't leave the nursery!*

He watched in horror as his best friend was trampled by the rouges.

"RougeClan, attack!" The call of the strange cats rung in Splashkits ears as he shrank back, his fur bristled.

Chapter 5

Splashkit cowered back into the nursery, his eyes wide in horror and shock. He ran to the hole in the back and dug into the ferns behind with shaking paws, and lay there trembling. He had a clear view to the nursery entrance, so he could see shadows falling over the opening in the little bramble cave, but that was it, he could see no further. He heard screeches of surprise and anger, but he just stayed in his hidey-hole, shaking and sweating in fear.

Suddenly, a large scarred tom crashed into the nursery, growling. He locked eyes with Splashkit in his hiding place, and he gave a killer smile, clawing at the bracken of the woven nursery wall, woven by long-worked claws piece by piece. His claws were whiskers away from Splashkits nose, and he waited for them to strike his muzzle. But it never happened, and Splashkit began to relax when he saw that the tom could not break through the tough wall of bracken to get to him. When the tom realized he made no progress towards chipping away at the walls, he stuck his large paw into the hold, missing Splashkit's whiskers by a heartbeat.

Splashkit's eyes widened and he backed further into the bush, concealing himself in the shadows. Finally, the big tom gave up, grumbling as he ran back to the battle. Splashkit heard screams of fear and pain, and he itched to get into the battle. But he knew he would never stand a chance; he was so small he'd be instantly crushed.

This thought reminded him of Brightkit, all alone in the middle of camp. A new wave of worry washed over his little head, and he poked his head up ever so slightly out of his hidey hole to see another angry looking cat just outside the nursery with a snarl on his face, leaping at the little kit. Splashkit shrank back instantly, narrowly missing the shredding claws swiping at his nose. The cat cackled, and left immediayely, his goal of frightening Splashkit out of his wits fufilled.

The screeches bore on until Splashkit felt he would never hear

clearly again, the ringing growing louder in his ears as each agonizingly long heartbeat dragged on until finally, there was a howl of defeat, and a screech of victory as the bracken crumbled and the attackers fled. Splashkit bolted out into the camp without hesitation and ran straight to the entrance where a mangled body lay in a heap. "Brightkit!" He was almost afraid to look, imagining the worst.

Brightkit looked up at him with her eye. While Splashkit desperately nosed her up, her wide eye opened wider and she whispered, "Are they gone? They trampled me!" She shivered with fright. "They would have killed me if I hadn't played dead!" She looked around at the camp, which was littered with tufts of fur and blood, and a few bodies.

"Oh no!" Splashkit cried with horror when he saw a pair of familiar bodies, one hairless and almost too tiny to see. Hunched over them was Spottedfern, screeching with agonized wails of grief.

"No! Please come back! *NO!*" She was sobbing over and over again into their fur, rocking back and fourth on her paws.

"No, no no no!" Whispered Brightkit behind him, and she gave a breathy gasp, in and out faster and faster as they moved slowly closer. "No!" She cried. Suddenly they couldn't take it, and they both looked at each other. Together, they bolted to the two clumps of skin, and Splashkit's fears were confirmed. Laying in a mangled, bloody heap, was Dustykit and Thistleshine.

*****

It was moonhigh. Splashkit lay nestled beside Brightkit and Fallingkit, breathing in the last scents of his friends' family with them. Thistleshine's body lay in a clumped, bloody mess, his eyes fixed in fear at a point in front of him. His mouth was frozen in a call of warning, his ears flattened. He was stiff and awkward, reeking of death and fear and blood, his original scent far far from the regular world. Spottedfern's wails had subsided, turning into antagonized whimpers of grief, and she was still rocking on her toes as she dug herself into the fur of her mate and the skin of her hairless son, while Poppystem soothed her with a poppy every so

often.

The world was drooping with stars when moonhigh passed, and suddenly, heavy with fatigue, Splashkit was unable to keep himself from dozing off. He slumped into Brightkit's fur with a thump.

Chapter 6

It was almost dawn when Splashkit woke again. Aquastar was nowhere that Splashkit could see; he assumed she was in her den. Apparently she had lost two lives in the battle as well. The clan had also lost Wrinklepaw, Creekjay, and then Thistleshine and Dustykit. Splashkit saw Redstrike, Wrinklepaw's uncle and mentor, hunched over his body as the burial patrol prepared the death herbs for the bodies. There were screams coming from Spottedfern. "No! Leave him, you'll mask his scent!" She screeched, throwing her arms around the two bodies. "No!"

Splashkit heard Poppystem lick Spottedfern gently, soothing the anguished cat. "Shh, come on, Spottedfern. Let's go rest," she was nudging the grieving queen to her feet as she whimpered and started to rock back and fourth, tears streaming down the sides of her cheeks. Poppystem whispered something more to Spottedfern and gave her a poppy before they disappeared in the medicine den.

Splashkit felt Brightkit press into him, and then lean into her father and brother. "I love you very much, Dad. It should have been me... Please, StarClan, make this all- all a dream..." She whispered. "Goodbye, brother. You would have been a great warrior. I love you both so much..." And with that she tore herself from Splashkit's pelt and bolted back to the nursery in tears.

Splashkit looked down at Thistleshine and Dustykit, touching his nose to the two in a gentle farewell before he dragged himself back to his nest as well. He curled around Brightkit and went to sleep, too heartbroken to say anything else to comfort his friend.

*****

Splashkit awoke to a strong tongue rasping his back. He half-heartedly wriggled out of his mother's grasp out of instinct. "Mom! What are you doing?!" He groaned. "Let me sleep!" It had been a moon since the death of Thistleshine and Dustykit, and he was now almost six moons. Almost an apprentice's age. "Mom!" He

complained again.

His mother purred with amusement. "Alright... I guess you don't want to look your best for the ceremony today..." Then Splashkit suddenly remembered with a squeal of glee what was going to happen. His eyes lit up and he jumped away from his mother, who was mid-lick. He bolted out and she sighed; half his fur was groomed down and the other half was spiked up in thorns. Splashkit didn't care, he was too excited to. He bounced out of the nursery happily, his tail waving.

"Morningkit! Dawnkit!!! Its our apprentice ceremony today!!" He screeched with pride. His eyes shone and he searched Morningkits eyes, looking hopefully for the same excitement his own held. Maybe they would bond over becoming apprentices?

But Morningkit just looked at him with disgust. She lifted a paw and shook it as if she had stepped in some dirt. Her voice was filled with discontent and snootiness. "Yeah, I noticed. Can't you actually *attempt* to clean your fur a little bit? You look like a hedgehog gone wrong!" She curled her lip. "Ew!"

Splashkit was stunned, his eyes turned down to his paws, his ears burning with shame. He shuffled his paws and wiped his wet cheek. "Sorry..." He whimpered with a sniff.

Morningkit looked at her sister with a laugh. Taking the chance to poke more fun, she snarled in Splashkits face. "*Sorry?* " She mocked. "*Sorry?!* You're such a mess up, sorry can't even *begin* to cover it! You're such a mistake, Splashkit! Go crawl back into the badger hole that you belong in!" She growled the last one in his face, shoving him to the dirt. Splashkit watched with broken eyes as they both stalked off, heads high. Splashkit felt like he wanted to run away, away from his horrible sisters and away from the clan. Maybe then he wouldn't have this much pain?

Splashkit's vision was blurry with tears as he got up to stand next to the great rock with his siblings. He avoided their gaze and just stared up at the rock.

"May every cat strong enough to swim against the current of the

river and climb to the top of the swaying sycamore, come gather to hear my words!" Aquastar yowled at the top of her lungs. Splashkit wiped away his tears, taking a shaking breath. His troubles began to melt ever so slightly away once the excitement of apprenticeship began to sink in to take its place. He could hardly believe it, soon he would be an apprentice!

Chapter 7

Splashkit smiled with pride as he was the first called up. *Take that Morningkit!* He thought with triumph and trotted up to the top, resisting the urge to run so Morningkit couldn't call him an over-excited badger when he toppled over on the way, which he surely would do if he was running. He turned to look out over the rest of the clan and puff his chest out with pride. "Splashkit," his mother began and he whipped around.

"Splashkit, from this day, until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Splashpaw." She rested her muzzle on his, in a sign of respect. Then she paused what seemed like a lifetime before continuing. Splashpaw gazed out over the crowd. *I hope I get a great mentor!* His fur suddenly rose in anxiety. *Oh no, what if I get someone mean? Will Morningkit make fun of me if I get the clan deputy?*

"Your mentor will be Redstrike." She finished, and Splashpaw looked for his mentor. Part of him felt scared that Morningkit might sneer at him, but his fears were quickly overcome when he saw the clan deputy, standing regally in the crowd. Splashpaw watched him pad closer in excitement. *Wow! He's a* great *mentor! I'm so lucky!*

Redstrike padded forward and thrust his small nose gently towards Splashpaw and he smiled back. Touching his nose to his mentor's, he watched the rest of the ceremony, but it was all a blur. All he could think was, *I'm finally an apprentice!!!*

Soon his siblings stood next to him beside their new mentors, and they puffed out their chests proudly beside Splashpaw as the clan called out their brand new names.

"Splashpaw! Morningpaw! Dawnpaw!" They cried. Then their mother raised her tail for silence and called Camelpaw and Venompaw forward. The clan fell into a hush.

"And now, these apprentices have passed their warrior assessments with flying colors, and their mentors have informed me that they

are ready to become warriors." Aquastar purred, flicking her tail. She paused to rest her chin on her forehead before continuing. "Venompaw, your name will be Venomrain. And Camelpaw is now Cameltail." Splashpaw was barely listening as the new warriors stepped back proudly, trying to think of what he was most excited for. Was it battle training? Hunting practice? Finally getting the chance to show Morningki- Morning*paw* that he was strong enough to fend for himself? His mind whirled.

When the meeting finally ended, Venomrain ran over to Redstrike, a look of pride and joy on her face. They exchanged purrs quickly, and then she went back to her former mentor, leaving Redstrike to smile at Splashpaw while Splashpaw smiled back.

"Well, little guy, what first? Tour, or training?" He offered. His steel figure was surprisingly gentle once he broke his ruthless outer shell of solitaire. Splashpaw purred.

"Whatever Morningpaw and Dawnpaw aren't doing! I want to be first at something!" He declared, and Redstrike chuckled.

"I like your way of thinking, Splashpaw!" He purred, tail waving in amusement. "Tour it is then!" Morningpaw's mentor, Snowtip, and Dawnpaw's mentor, Treevice, were chatting together about training schedules, while Splashpaw scampered after his mentor, following him through the woods. They padded around, heading west first, Splashpaw asking millions of questions all the time.

"Whats this?" He asked as they passed a thornbush. "What's that?" He inquired as they trotted towards a little brook. "Oooh!" Something shiny caught Splashpaws eye. Too eager to train, Splashpaw ran up to a big bush, and then he pushed through it, into a large clearing. Redstrike ran towards him, fur puffed in alarm.

"Splashpaw, no!" He cried behind him as Splashpaw ran ahead towards a big, straight blue den. Then a growl sounded from a flap in the side and a big animal rushed out on two legs. It's massive hind paws thumped the ground and it swung a large object behind its hairy head, letting out an angered yell. Splashpaw scrambled backwards and yelped as a metal jaw closed around his hind paw.

"Ow! Redstrike, help!" He screamed, but Redstrike didn't appear. Instead the large animal swung its pink paws down next to Splashpaw's head, and he yelped, trying to move out of the way. Then the twoleg gave a grumble and dropped his weapon, tearing the metal jaw out of the ground and picking Splashpaw up. Splashpaw screamed. "Help me!" He cried, kicking furiously with his remaining legs. Then suddenly a fierce battle cry sang in the air and a cloud of cats hurtled themselves at the twoleg.

<terms>

Metal jaw= bear trap

Weapon= broom xD

Landmark in territory= hostile twoleg den

I will make a map and put it in the next chapter ^•^

Chapter 8

[image]

A/N: map above is the whole territory! We are DewClan. The rouges that attacked live in the neutral territory. Splashpaw is attacked at the Hostile Twoleg clearing.

Splashpaw saw Venomrain and Cameltail fighting beside Redstrike and Aquastar. Snowtip and Treevice were there too, and Splashpaw saw two pairs of glowing eyes in the bushes, side by side. His mother clawed the twoleg's hing calf, and it dropped Splashpaw with a raging screech, stomping around in anger. It grabbed its stick and began whacking the ground vigorously with the hay covered end in an effort to make contact with Splashpaw's clanmates. He watched as they scattered frantically to get out of the way.

Splashpaw lay in a painful bloody heap, his injured paw mangled and useless under him. He struggled to his paws and limped heavily to refuge in the bushes, panting. His paw hung in a bloody limp mess behind him as he dragged it along, inch by painful inch. It seemed as if the bush was seasons away, yet he reached it it only a few agonizing heartbeats. He reached the bushes and collapsed in a heap.

Dawnpaw raced over to him, her eyes wide. Her ears were flattened and her eyes were crumpled in concern for her adopted brother. Morningpaw's menacing eyes cut through the dimly lit bush to Splashpaw, but he hardly noticed. He was too busy being shocked at Dawnpaw's note of serious worry for his injury. "Oh my gosh! Are you okay, Splashpaw?!" Dawnpaw ran gentle paws over his injury. She suddenly froze, turning to look behind her where Morningpaw was giving her a glare. Dawnpaw glared back, standing up for herself this time before something could even form in Morningpaw's mind. "I don't care what you say this time, Morningpaw! He's our *brother,* and he's in *pain* for StarClan's sake! Show at least a *bit* of sympathy!" She retorted to her before her sister could even open her mouth and spit out some sort of insult.

Splashpaw watched Morningpaw's eyes widen in anger, but she held back her claws, her amber eyes blazing. She seethed at Dawnpaw, and Splashpaw waited for something to happen anxiously. Finally, she spoke, causing Splashpaw to flinch. "Ugh! You little mousebrains!" She spat in the dirt beside Splashpaw and glared at them before whipping around and stomping away.

Dawnpaw watched her leave, her eyes sparkling with sadness and a tad bit of relief before she turned back to Splashpaw. She lowered her eyes guiltily, shuffling her paws. Splashpaw gave her a little nod. "Look... I don't know where to start, but... I guess I should start with an apology, so-" she looked down. "I'm sorry... You know how close me and Morningpaw had to be because our real mother died. But I know now that the way she acts is not the way I want to. Can you ever forgive me?" Her eyes pleaded him, staring into Splashpaw's eyes sadly. Splashpaw smiled.

"Thank you, Dawnpaw. Thank you..." Was all Splashpaw could say as Dawnpaw gave a smile of relief. Her shoulders visibly relaxed and she sighed.

"Ok. Lets get you to camp. The warriors can handle themselves... I need Nightgaze to take a look at you... I'd ask Poppystem, but she's sick with a bad case of greencough right now. Can you believe it? It's not even leafbare! I hope she gets better..." She wriggled underneath his shoulder and hoisted him up as she rambled, and Splashpaw gave a grunt as he got to his paws once more.

He groaned as he limped along, leaning heavily on Dawnpaw's shoulder. It seemed like forever when he finally got to camp, and he gratefully sank into the nest, stretching out his injured paw for Nightgaze to examine before falling fast asleep.

Chapter 9

"Come on, out, in, out, in," Nightgaze coached Splashpaw through his paw exercises. Turns out he had broken his ankle, and he had just started strengthening exercises after about four sunrises. The break was healing nicely after a moon, according to Nightgaze. And Splashpaw was happy to oblige in helping with his chores until the next gathering, when Nightgaze told him he should be healed enough to go.

"Almost done?" Splashpaw asked as he stretched his hind paw out one more time. It was already beginning to ache and throb, and he had only just started. Nightgaze nodded, and placed gentle paws back on his leg to guide it out a few more times.

"Two more. In, out... In, out," Nightgaze finished. After a sigh of relief from Splashpaw, he set the apprentices paw down and Splashpaw stuck it out for Nightgaze to place the brace back on.

"Thanks, Nightgaze," he said as he tightened the reeds. After a few heartbeats, the familiar restricting feeling in his leg returned, and he sighed, he looked around for something to do. He flexed his claws in annoyance. He just itched to run and begin his training again; after all, he was almost better. He could almost walk now. He turned to Nightgaze when he was done. "Can I please go out? I want to watch Morningpaw and Dawnpaw's training!" He pleaded. Nightgaze opened his mouth to object, but Splashpaw moved closer persistently. "I promise to be good and I won't overuse my paw!" He begged again. He wasn't going to take no for an answer, and the medicine cat seemed to know that. Nightgaze finally sighed and sat down.

"Fine, you can-" He began, but before he could even finish, Splashpaw interrupted him with a squeal of glee. Then Nightgaze gave him a hard stare with his blind blue eyes. "But no training! I will help you get there and explain to Snowtip and Treevice they are not to let you move an inch!" Splashpaw gave a disappointed grunt as Nightgaze got up and nosed under Splashpaw's shoulder,

helping him up as Splashpaw sighed.

"Fine... I won't try anything..." Splashpaw groaned as he limped to the entrance of camp where Brightkit followed, bouncing up to him. Her eye shone with all the innocence of a kit. He purred, remembering when he was a kit too. Something about Brightkit just made him smile. "Hi Brightkit!" He said with a grin.

Brightkit hopped up to his level, which wasn't hard, considering how small Splashpaw was. But Brightkit was smaller still. She bounced around, excited and hyper as always. Her lips bubbled out words that Splashpaw could hardly keep up with. "Hi Splashpaw! Are you feeling better? Tell me again what happened?" She started, her eye big and round as a plump piece of prey. "Please?" She fluttered her eyelashes.

Splashpaw smiled. "I'll tell you later, Brightkit. I'm off to watch training! Nightgaze finally let me leave the medicine den!" He purred. Brightkit jumped around, prancing in a circle around Nightgaze and Splashpaw.

"Ok! I'll see you later then! Maybe you could tell me the story before bed?" Splashpaw nodded and Brightkit squealed. "Yay! That's a great story! I bet Morningpaw and Dawnpaw are jealous of you! You got into a battle with a twoleg on your first day! You're sooooo cool!" Splashpaw gave a tight nod. *It isn't that...* He longed to say, her words suddenly causing the pain of his sisters relationship with him to return. But Brightkit was already scampering away. Splashpaw sighed and got up, limping to the training bank with Nightgaze alongside him. *Its not that simple...* He thought, not quite sad, but feeling the familiar pang of loneliness that accompanied thoughts of Morninngpaw creep into his mind.

Chapter 10

"Ha! Take *that*, Dawnpaw!" Morningpaw was hissing. Her eyes were wild and almost tinted with enjoyment as they were battling together. It was their first battle training checkpoint, where apprentices had to battle each other. Morningpaw had begged to use claws, but Snowtip refused firmly. Morningpaw hated her mentor, and she made it a point to disobey her whenever possible. Splashpaw didn't put it past her to use her claws anyway, even if Snowtip had commanded her not to. Morningpaw was not very obedient, Snowtip was quickly learning, but at least she tried.

"Shes so *soft!"* Morningpaw would say. "Why would anyone want *her* to be a warrior of the clan?! Doesn't DewClan need strong, fierce warriors that aren't afraid of hurting anyone?" Splashpaw had to admit, her logic had a point, but regardless, Snowtip was a fierce and loyal she cat, and she was equally as ruthless on the battle field as she was kind to her clanmates.

Splashpaw watched as Dawnpaw dodged the next attack from her sister, ducking under her expertly placed swipe to the head. He saw her hiss and bat back, but Morningpaw hopped away easily, and without a moment to spare. Without warning, Morningpaw leaped up, and soared over her sister, pushing back on the dirt to wriggle underneath her sister and pummel her belly mercilessly. Dawnpaw winced a tiny bit, and Splashpaw noticed a flash of glinting claws.

"*Morningpaw!* Stop at *once!"* Snowtip scolded, having seen it too. "How many tines have I told you? *No claws!"* Snowtip was smoldering as she pried Morningpaw out from underneath Dawnpaw.

Dawnpaw got up and stepped away from her sister, hurt in her gaze as she limped over to Splashpaw. Morningpaw snorted. "I used my claws because it created an adrenaline rush and motivated my opponent to fight harder," she growled. "Dawnpaw needed it anyway. She can't fight. She's too much of a wimp!" Sticking out her tongue at her sister, she yelped indignantly as Snowtip cuffed her

behind the ears.

"Come with me, *now!"* Snowtip growled, and stalked back to camp, tail lashing. "You wait and see when Aquastar finds out!" Splashpaw heard Morningpaw groan and mutter something before they were out of sight.

Treevice nodded. "Right. Dawnpaw, let's get you back too. Nightgaze can inspect those cuts on your belly," he said and nosed her up. "I'll help you Splashpaw. Dawnpaw can still walk, you can't." He smiled kindly, nosing Splashpaw to his paws. Splashpaw gave a smile of thanks and limped along with them, leaning on his strong shoulder.

*****

"You are constantly disobeying my orders!" Snowtip was yelling to Morningpaw in front of a gathering crowd when Splashpaw limped through the entrance. "You are deliberately ignoring me *every* training session, and I've even caught you you sneaking away from training to *sleep!* I am fed up with you!" She scolded. Aquastar curled a firm tail around her daughter and gave her a questioning glare.

"Is this true, Morningpaw?" Aquastar asked calmly as Snowtip sat down again. It was almost as if you could see the steam rushing from the black speckled she cat's ears. Snowtip glared at her apprentice, as if daring her to deny.

The yelling was drawing a crowd from their dens. Splashpaw heard Brightkit say, "Mom, why did Aquastar wake us up?"

Morningpaw shuffled her paws and mumbled something too quiet and angry for Splashpaw to hear. Aquastar leaned down further, her eyebrows raised in expectation and a little bit of annoyance. "Say it again?" She said, her voice airy while her disposition was anything but.

"Yeah, its true..." Morningpaw mumbled a bit louder, still staring at her paws and pouting. She flattened her ears in anger and embarrassment. Splashpaw let out a snicker.

Finally! She'll get whats coming! He thought triumphantly in his head as Aquastar got up to retreat to her den, beckoning Snowtip and Redstrike to follow. Splashpaw knew she would be discussing Morningpaw's punishment, and the thought of her finally paying for everything she'd done made Splashpaw giddy. *Maybe after this she'll leave me alone,* he thought.

Splashpaw gave Morningpaw a smug look and she glared at him, causing Splashpaw to quickly gather himself and limp towards the medicine den. When she started to get up, her face frozen in a snarl, Splashpaw's ears pinned to his skull. He sucked in a worried breath, limping faster. *Almost there, you'll be safe from her with Nightgaze-* He glanced behind himself, eyes widening. But he wasn't quick enough and after the crowd retreated back to their dens, she pinned him.

Chapter 11

Morningpaw dug glittering claws into Splashpaw's shoulders. Her eyes were glimmering with hatred, boring into his mind like a saw. "You tipped them off!" She growled angrily. Splashpaw flinched. He cowered away from her face and cringed in pain.

"N-No! Morningpaw, you've got it all wrong! How could this be my fault?" He stammered, his ears flattening cleanly against his skull. He shook his head, closing his eyes and shrinking away.

Morningpaw spat in his face, slapping him across the cheek. Fury blazed in her eyes as she continued her threats. "I'm going to rip you to shreds, Splashpaw! if you ever cross me again-" She looked up as Aquastar called for Morningpaw from the leader's den. Morningpaw let out a growl of disappointment and sheathed her claws, releasing her grip slowly. She cast one more raging glare at Splashpaw, who gulped down his fear. "We'll finish this later, " she hissed quietly. "You'd better keep looking behind you if you want to keep your toes!" Her casual parting threat blew lazily over her shoulders as she slipped behind the hanging lichen in his mother's den with a grunt, ready to receive her punishment.

Splashpaw shook his head and rubbed his bleeding cheek, getting up painfully and hobbling to his nest. Not wanting to interact with anyone anymore after the ordeal, he curled up, facing his back to everyone, and fell asleep.

*****

Redstrike popped his head into Splashpaw's den just as the sun shone gently through the den entrance. "Up up up!" He said cheerfully. "Training!"

It had been a moon since the clash with Morningpaw, two moons since his apprenticeship. He was finally having his first battle session. This was the first day of training since his paw injury, and Splashpaw was so excited to finally begin to learn about combat.

His head shot up from under his tail, and he bounded out, skidding in the grass. The sun was just peeking out from the top of the forest, greeting his face with it's gentle dawn rays.

"Let's go!" He cried, making a beeline for the camp entrance. He raced ahead and Redstrike gave a little laugh, trotting after him.

Splashpaw skidded to a halt to wait for his mentor, arousing a cloud of dust that tickled his nose. He let out a sneeze, and heard a small purr of amusement from his mentor as he came up behind him. Redstrike strolled beside him as Splashpaw turned around and puffed up his chest. As they made their way to the training clearing, Splashpaw was just as excited as the first day he had been out. Though he was a little more tentative and stayed closer to his mentor this time, he was still curious about everything. By the time they had arrived, he still hadn't run out of questions for bombardment.

"Can we learn how to fight a badger? What about a fox? Ooh! I heard Aquastar talking about water combat!" He babbled on and on. "What first?!"

Redstrike set a paw on Splashpaw's shoulder gently, a smile light on his lips. "Calm down. We're going to practice basic withdrawal from an opponent first," he said. Splashpaw squealed with glee.

"Ok! What do I do?" He asked, enthusiastic to learn even something as simple as withdrawal. Crouching in the dirt of the clearing, he looked at him, eyes shining.

Redstrike smiled, placing his paws in front of him in a strong battle stance before lifting his chin proudly. "Attack me," he commanded, and Splashpaw didn't pause a heartbeat.

*****

They trained for the rest of the day, until the sun was well under the horizon. Splashpaw proved an excellent hunter, but he struggled in battle.

"Try spacing your legs farther apart so you're more stable,"

Redstrike said. Splashpaw was holding his front paw up, simulating a basic swipe. He kept toppling over with every swipe. He did as he was told, only to fall flat once more. Wiping the dirt from his face and shaking his pelt, he got once again to his paws, his expression obviously irritated.

"Fox dung!" Splashpaw cursed under his breath. While he shook himself off, preparing to try again, he paused, perking his ears. He had heard a tiny giggle coming from the bushes behind him. Curling his lip, he bared his teeth and spun around, trying to hide the flush of embarrassment that rose to his cheeks. "Morningpaw!" He growled.

Morningpaw's glittering blue eyes narrowed and blinked once, shimmering with amusement. She stepped out of the bush, followed closely by Dawnpaw, who was staring at the ground quietly. Splashpaw gulped down his fear and stared his sister in the eye, his heart racing.

Chapter 12

Morningpaw gave an amused snort, looking Splashpaw up and down in disgust. Kicking the dirt, she opened her mouth and insults came pouring out. "You're so *pathetic!* How's a kit with your skill going to become a warrior?!" Splashpaw felt tears well up in his eyes. He looked at his paws and flattened his ears, taking the injury to his pride silently. Morningpaw went on.

"The only battle *you* would win is the battle of weather or not you get the hare in the fresh kill pile! Go home, Splashpaw! You're of no use here!" Morningpaw sneered. She lifted her chin, and began to stalk off, her sister following behind her. Splashpaw breathed a sigh of relief and wiped his face, but then Morningpaw froze. She spun around, her eyes filled with a calm mischief. She grinned slowly. "I wish you would have died instead of your sister. Weren't you the runt one?" She took a step closer. "I thought Dawnkit was stronger than you. Why did she die instead of you?"

Spashpaw's eyes widened in horror at the mention of his biological sister. How did Morningpaw even know about her? Everything she had said was true. He *had* been the runt, and Dawnkit had been much stronger than him. The clan was shaken when Dawnkit died.

Morningpaw ended her bombardment with a laugh, rolling her eyes. "I bet Dawnkit would've been a *way* better warrior than you, you puny mousebrain." She waved her tail high in the air and stared at him, satisfied with her handiwork.

Splashpaw backed away, his eyes soaked with tears. He opened his mouth to retort something back, but all that came out were choked sobs. He pushed his way past Morningpaw and ran, as far as he could before collapsing in the grass.

He sobbed and sobbed. If only Brightpaw had been with him. She was apprenticed on his first official day of training. She could make him feel better. She always eased the pain of his stupid, horrible life. Morningpaw was right. He should have died instead of

Dawnkit. He *was*, after all, the smaller one at birth. Maybe he should set things right...

Then Splashpaw thought of Brightpaw. She needed him. She would be all alone to face the taunts if Morningpaw. She would never cope with his death *and* Morningpaw. No, Splashpaw had to fight through it. For Brightpaw. It was only fair to her after all she'd done for him...

Splashpaw dried his tears. He had to go back to camp. It was getting late, and he knew his mother would be looking for him. Getting to his paws, he dragged himself dejectedly towards the direction of camp.

*****

Splashpaw lay in his nest beside Brightpaw. One moon had passed since Splashpaw's horrible night. He now cried himself to sleep silently every night, thinking of how much he just wanted to *end* it... *End* it... *End* it... But only the thought of Brightpaw's reassuring gaze and comforting touch pulled him from the brink of death every time. It was solely Brightpaw's smile that Splashpaw depended on. It was as if he were hanging from a cliff, slipping, falling, and only Brightpaw had the rope he clung to for dear life.

Splashpaw had spent more and more time in Nightgaze's den. Poppystem had died the night before of a heart attack, and now Nightgaze was the sole medicine cat of DewClan. Splashpaw enjoyed the blind tom's dry jokes every so often. He and Brightpaw were his lifeline, pulling him back every day. Splashpaw sighed.

Nightgaze had asked him to become his apprentice. He had told him Splashpaw had a natural knack for herbs, and Nightgaze was getting old as well. So Splashpaw now had to make the most important decision of his life. Leave warriorism, leave Brightpaw, and join Nightgaze, living life easy, with no Morningpaw, and no more nights spent crying and wishing. Or, stay with his beloved Brightpaw and endure it.

He stared at Brightpaw's golden pelt as it rose and fell. What was he going to do?

Chapter 13

"Brightpaw?" Splashpaw whispered, shaking her ever so slightly. "Brightpaw, I need to tell you something important..."

Brightpaw stirred. "Splashpaw? Yeah, whats up?" She asked gently. It was almost dawn. Splashpaw looked at his paws, pulling Brightpaw after him as he padded out of the den and into the forest.

"Brightpaw, I have to tell you... I love you so much, Brightpaw, but I think StarClan is calling me to a different life. I-I think StarClan needs me to be-" he broke off, staring at his paws. He couldn't bear the way Brightpaw was looking at him.

Brightpaw was staring at him, her eye wide in sadness and hurt. She lowered her head slowly. "B-But what will happen to us? I thought we would be mates when we were older, Splashpaw... I-I..." She was speechless. Splashpaw felt his heart break.

"Brightpaw, we can still be mates when we are older. Because the only reason the code is against it is because it distracts the medicine cat! I won't get distracted!" He whispered. Moving forward to lick her missing eye, he nuzzled her. "I love you too much to let you go," he whispered.

Brightpaw purred. "I love you more than there are stars in the sky," she answered back quietly. Together they sat until the sun rose, vowing to never let their love get in the way of their duties. They would never reveal their secret.

•~•¥•~•

"All cats strong enough to swim against the current of the mighty river gather to hear my words!" Aquastar's crisp, clear yowl rang in Splashpaw's ears, and he uncurled his tail from Brightpaw's. Morningpaw gave Splashpaw a smug glare and trotted out next to Dawnpaw and Fallingpaw, twining her tail in his. Splashpaw sighed. His last day as a warrior apprentice...

"Today we welcome two new warriors and one new apprentice!" His mother said proudly. Splashpaw padded out, sheilding his eyes from the cutting light of the rising sun, and settling himself on the far side, beside Brightpaw.

"Morningpaw! Dawnpaw!" Aquastar called proudly, and Morningpaw gave a triumphant yowl of joy. She raced up as fast as she could and shot a satisfactory stare at Splashpaw, before turning back to Aquastar. "Morningpaw, you have received great training from Snowtip, and I think you are ready to become a warrior," his mother began. Morningpaw nodded, and Splashpaw heard a huff of exasperation from somewhere in the crowd. "You will be Morningshine," she finished. Morningshine trotted back down, and returned to her spot.

Dawnpaw replaced her. "Dawnpaw shall be Dawnmist, after the misty morning on which you were found," Aquastar said. Dawnmist beamed and ran back down the rock.

"Dawnmist! Morningshine!!" The clan chanted. Then all eyes turned on Splashpaw.

"Splashpaw, step forward," Aquastar ordered, and Splashpaw did as he was told. *Here goes...*

Chapter 14

Brightpaw gave Splashpaw a look of sadness before he padded up to his mother. "I'm ready, mom," he said loudly, his voice wavering a slight bit. Aquastar looked fondly at her son, with sad and proud eyes.

"Splashpaw wishes to train in the ways of medicine. Nightgaze, come forward please?" She called.

Splashpaw touched noses with Nightgaze and smiled, puffing up his chest in pride to hide his twisting, knotting belly. Aquastar hugged her only son, tears of pride in her eyes.

"Splashpaw, I wish you could have been an amazing warrior, and that one day, you could stand beside me as deputy, but that is not the path StarClan has laid for you. I respect your wishes, my son, and I send my luck along your journey as a medicine cat," she said to him. Splashpaw dipped his head and retreated back beside Nightgaze.

Suddenly the tom whipped around. "Remember your duties," he said in a low voice, his blind eyes boring into Splashpaw's. Splashpaw gulped.

"I-I don't know what-" Nightgaze interrupted him with a raise of an eyebrow.

"Just remember your place, Splashpaw. You are no longer a warrior apprentice. This code is different, I expect you to know that," he said seriously, flicking his tail subtly at Brightpaw. "Keep your head out of the clouds," he finished.

Splashpaw stared at him, dumbfounded. "Nightgaze, what are you going on about now?" A worried mew came from the entrance of the den. Splashpaw let out a sigh of relief when Nightgaze forgot all about Splashpaw and turned to Redstrike.

"Nothing. What do you need?" He asked, sitting down and curling his tail-tip around his paws. Splashpaw looked fondly at his former mentor. Venomrain and Redstrike had been inseparable since Venomrain's warrior ceremony, and now she was expecting his kits. He purred.

Redstrike gave a worried glance at his mate, laying in the clearing. "Venomrain's getting pains in her belly. I'm worried. Its too early!" He cried. Splashpaw had never seen Redstrike this fidgety before. He was always so calm and collected!

Nightgaze nodded. "Calm down. It's plenty natural for a kitting to begin a bit early. Sometimes the kits come a few days late, sometimes they're earlybirds. She'll be fine," he soothed the tom. Turning to Splashpaw, he listed the herbs he needed. "I need chervil, borage, poppy, cobweb, marigold, and a few sturdy sticks. Meet me in the clearing. Redstrike, you come with me," Nightgaze ordered, and left Splashpaw to race into the store, grabbing the herbs he was already so familiar with.

Scrabbling his claws around, he sniffed, letting his eyes adjust to the dim light. He saw the bright flowering bud of a marigold, and he snatched a few stems up in his jaws, placing it into a pile outside the entrance to the store. Then he wrapped cobweb around his paw, and shook a few poppy seeds onto a beech leaf, and smothered it in honey to ease it down a queens throat. He got the chervil, borage, and wrapped it all up with a vine in a big bundle. Then he took it up in his mouth and raced outside to his new mentor. His first kitting! He had to get it right.

Chapter 15

"Nightgaze! What do I do first?" Splashpaw asked as he unbundled the herbs and arranged them in a neat pile. Cobwebs, honey-poppy, borage, chervil, and three sturdy sticks. They were all arranged in order to when he needed them. Nightgaze nodded to the sticks, Splashpaw nosed one over to Venomrain. "Here, bite when the pain comes," he instructed, knowing what Nightgaze needed from the many lessons when he was injured in his den.

Venomrain gave a grateful smile, and groaned. Splashpaw saw the stick crumble a bit under the pressure, and he quickly glanced at her belly. He watched Nightgaze place paws on her belly just below her hips and work the skin. "Put your paws here, you can feel the kits until the muscles tighten. Thats when you know the kitting begins." He instructed. Splashpaw did as he was told.

He pressed his paws into her soft, plump belly fur, and he could feel one, two, three, four tiny lumps. They squirmed at his touch, and he smiled. *Four gifts for the clan... Redstrike will be so proud!*

Suddenly the muscles tightened and he could feel the kits no more. He turned to Nightgaze. "Theres four. What do I do first?" He asked.

Nightgaze nodded. "Let me. You nip the sacs and lick the fur like I taught you," he said. Splashpaw nodded, poised and ready for the first kit. He saw that a crowd had gathered around Venomrain. Cameltail sat beside Redstrike, chewing her claws nervously as she watched her sister, and Snowtip sat beside her daughters.

Splashpaw heard Venomrain groan and yowl, and Nightgaze ducked, grabbing a leaf and sliding the kit onto it. He quickly passed the kit to Splashpaw, who immediately bent down to break the sac with his teeth and lick the tiny toms fur backwards to warm his blood and get his lungs to work. He heard a mewl and smiled, nosing the tom to his father to watch. "Keep track of them until shes done," Splashpaw said, guessing Venomrain didn't want to deal with kits at her belly quite at the moment.

The next one was a tiny white she cat with red tabby markings and paws, her long fluffy tail ending in a maroon tint. Splashpaw thought her long claws and red markings perfectly reflected each parent, dreaming that one day he had a kit just like that...

The next two kits were small and they didn't mewl right away when Splashpaw licked. Nightgaze moved Splashpaw over when the last one came out stillborn. "Move! I have to save him!" He growled and Splashpaw nodded, stepping back.

He saw Nightgaze bend over to breathe heavily into the kits' lungs, puffing madly. But the kit still didn't respond, and after a few desperate heartbeats, Nightgaze shook his head. "Venomrain, come say goodbye to your two sons..." He said sadly. Redstrike bowed his head.

"They would have been noble warriors."

Splashpaw licked Venomrain, who was burying her muzzle in the two still bodies, her shoulders shuddering with quiet sobs. Nightgaze's tail grazed his tail, leading him out to let the grieving mates have time alone. The clan filed out, the air still and sad. He looked at Nightgaze, then at the moon.

How could the day turn so solemn so fast?

Chapter 16

"Come on, Splashpaw! I found a hiding spot for us to go each night!" Brightpaw pulled Splashpaw along the forest, towards the DewClan border. They headed towards the east side of the territory, across the river and up towards the waterfall. Hardly anyone hunted near here. The prey used this a a sanctuary to thrive and DewClan kept it that way, so they could always have a fresh supply of food. Brightpaw climbed the slippery rocks near the middle of the waterfall and leaped gracefully into it, disappearing beneath the sheets of shimmering water.

Splashpaw smiled. "Cave?! Cool!" He cried, jumping in after her. Brightpaw purred.

"Isn't it great?! No one knows about it, and the best part is, it's huge! We can explore!" She squeaked. Her eye shone with happiness.

Splashpaw purred too, curling up beside her and tucking his tail around her body. "The kits reminded me of us today," he murmured through drowsy purrs. She smiled.

"One day we can have kits that perfectly reflect each of us..." She purred. Splashpaw nodded in agreement.

Brightpaw got up, stretching. "Guess what?" She said, a playful glint in her eye. She crouched, stalking towards him and pouncing with a laugh. Splashpaw purred.

"What?" He asked, as she toppled over him, and landed on top of his belly. They lay there, gazing lovingly into each other, and Brightpaw purred harder.

"I passed my assessment! Aquastar is making me a warrior early!" She squealed with glee. Splashpaw smiled and leaned up for a kiss.

"Thats perfect, Brightpaw!" He whispered, his eyes closed and his

throat throbbing and thumping with the sound of his purrs. Brightpaw puffed her chest out in pride.

"My ceremony is tomorrow! I'll be a warrior!"

Splashpaw purred, breathing in her sweet, sweet scent. This day was perfect.

*****

"Clan meeting!" Aquastar coughed from the base of the highrock. She was catching greencough, with leaf bare approaching fast and furiously. The clan gathered near the rock in a tight cluster, and Brightpaw licked her brothers forehead lovingly before prancing up beside Aquastar. Splashpaw was settled beside Nightgaze, and Redstrike was sitting beside the nursery with Heronkit and Fishkit. Venomrain was sleeping.

"Brightpaw has passed her warrior assessment with flying colors. Her mentor, Firegaze, has requested her apprentice is given her full warrior name early to reflect her perfect score. Brightpaw, step forward!" Aquastar called proudly, and Brightpaw took a shaking step forward.

"Brightpaw, I name you Brightshine in honor of your shining spirit and your bright personality. I know StarClan will welcome you into the clan with honor and respect." Aquastar finished.

"Brightshine! Brightshine!" The clan cheered. Splashpaw heard Fallingpaw call his sister's name loudest of all, his eyes shining and sparkling with joy and pride. Morningshine was glaring at the great rock, tail flicking the slightest bit beside Fallingpaw. Splashpaw ignored her and cheered along with his clan.

"Brightshine! Brightshine!"

Chapter 17

Splashpaw woke in his den to Aquastar calling the gathering patrol. He got up, stretching. It had been three moons since Brightshine's warrior ceremony. Fallingfeather followed his sister the next moon with his, and Morningshine had never left his side since then. Splashpaw trotted out of his den, following Nightgaze. He could maybe sneak away to meet with Brightshine tonight.

"Nightgaze, can I stay this time? I need to catch up on sleep..." Splashpaw gave a huge yawn and rubbed his eyes. Nightgaze nodded.

"Alright. I've been working you hard these days. Why don't you sort some herbs with me when I get back and I'll tell you all the news," He suggested and Splashpaw's eyes sparkled.

"Alright! Thanks," he said, and trotted back to his den. Curling up in his den, he pretended to fall asleep until the commotion died down. He evened his breathing and slowed his heart, making sure his eyes were open so he didn't actually sleep. When everyone left, he got cautiously to his feet and crept to the warriors den.

"Brightshine?" He whispered. Brightshine's head shot up, her eye staring at his immediately. She got out, understanding his motives, and together they snuck out, going through the dirtplace tunnel.

Trotting together, they each leaped across the freezing river and followed the bank to their secret waterfall cave. Brightshine smiled at him, even though she was panting when they arrived, her breath clouding in the leaf bare air.

Splashpaw looked at her with concern. Had she always been this plump? Was she eating too much? "Whats wrong? Are you catching greencough too?" The snow crunched under his toes as he circled her worriedly.

Brightshine shook her head. "No, I'm fine. Just a bit winded..." She

murmured back with a beaming smile. Suddenly the realization hit Splashpaw like a tom of bricks. He put two and two together. Excited sweat beaded at his brow and he smiled, jumping up and down.

"Brightshine! You're expecting!" He cried, his mew interrupted by purrs of joy. Brightshine gave a little nod and smiled broadly, her eye squinting up with laughter.

"You got it! Aren't you supposed to be a *medicine cat?"* She teased, and Splashpaw laughed, shoving her gently.

"Thats great, Brightshine! Oh, can you imagine how perfect they'll be?!" He leaned up against her shoulders. They spent the night laying together in the cave, and soon the two happy mates were fast asleep.

*****

Splashpaw woke in a thick, dense forest. The stars had disappeared, and the sky was blood red. The ground was sticky beneath his toes. He sank down slowly with a disgusting squelch each time he took a step. Splashpaw curled his lip with disgust. "Ew!"

Pushing his way through the slimy trees, he sniffed the air. He immediately closed his mouth and retched at the reek of death and blood that bombarded him like a tital wave, nearly knocking him over. He regained his footing, and pricked his ears.

Hearing wails, he trotted after the sound. Rounding a bend, he stared in horror at the sight that met him.

A long, endless row of faceless kits stood, their features familiar. But Splashpaw had never seen them before. He knew the scents, but he couldn't name them right then. He stood, staring blindly at the large shadow standing at one end of the row of kits.

Then, one by one, the shadow moved down the line, striking each kit to death until the wails of pain died with each one. He made his way swiftly down the line of kits, killing each one. Splashpaw watched in horror.

He turned around, wanting to run, but he met glittering eyes and an evil grin. The shadowy cat cackled, and started to chase him, claws out and ready to kill him. Splashpaw ran as fast as he could, but he reached a dead end, running blindly off of a large cliff, and plunging down into an endless dark abyss. Then the cat spoke.

"The lake of blood will grow with every strike. Kits will drown in rivers of endless blood and pain and the clan will be wiped out. Only the ringed tail and the dappled turtle can deliver us from the fatal morning star!"

Then everything went dark.

Chapter 18

Splashpaw woke, smelling the air. His tail swished. He felt beads of sweat roll down his face. He smelled two unfamiliar scents, but at the same time, he felt deep down, like he knew them. He felt Brightshine tense beside him.

"Whats wrong?" Brightshine asked gently. Splashpaw shook. his eyes were wide as he gulped.

"I saw a vision," He whispered. Brightshine's eye widened as he went on. "And I have received a prophecy. *'The lake of blood will grow with every strike. Kits will drown in rivers of endless blood and pain and the clan will be wiped out. Only the ringed tail and the dappled turtle can deliver us from the fatal morning star!'"* Splashpaw carefully recited, and Brightshine looked down, her face darkening.

"What does it mean?" She whispered. Splashpaw shook his head.

"I don't know. But I saw it, Brightshine. A shadow, wiping out a line of kits one by one... I saw them die... And when I woke, I smelled two familiar scents, but I don't know them..." He whispered. "What does it all mean?"

Brightshine looked into his eyes seriously. "I don't know. But I do know our kits may not be safe. We have to find the ringed tail and the dappled turtle before it's too late!"

Splashpaw opened his mouth to speak, but he was interrupted by a screech of grief from the direction of the camp, rising up to their ears with the dawning sun. "Let's go!" Splashpaw scrambled up and ran out of the cave, leaping gracefully over the river to the bank and pelting in the direction of camp.

Brightshine followed closely behind. The screech echoed through their ears again. Splashpaw recognized it.

"It's Venomrain!" He puffed, pushing himself faster. He burst into

the camp, and skidded to a halt in horror. There, laying in a heap, was a white body. As Splashpaw got closer, he noticed a red paw in the tangle of limp limbs.

"No!" Splashpaw breathed, staring at the body. Brightshine puffed up behind him, looking at him in concern.

"Whats wr- oh StarClan no..." She interrupted herself when Redstrike's body caught her eye. Venomrain's agonized wail cut through the air once more, and Splashpaw bowed his head.

*****

The moon had rose high in the sky when Nightgaze touched Splashpaw's shoulder. "Burial... Its nearly moonhigh..." He whispered. Splashpaw's head shot up.

"Nightgaze! Is Aquastar well enough to appoint a new deputy?" He whispered.

Nightgaze shook his head. "She cannot get up on her own. But she has told me her choice." He said. "I will announce it. You must bury Redstrike with his loved ones."
Splashpaw nodded. Touching Venomrain's shoulder, he nodded to her.

"Time for burial, Venomrain." He whispered. Venomrain nodded. Rounding up the kits, she gave Redstrike a kiss on his stiffening cheeks.

"I love you, Redstrike..." She whispered. The kits bowed their heads.

Chapter 19

Fishkit took a paw of her father. Her white pelt shone next to him. She was identical to his sparkling fur. She lifted his red paw and hoisted it up on her shoulder. Heronkit did the same. His silver pelt sparkled in the starlight. Venomrain lifted his torso and wriggled underneath, while Splashpaw took the shoulders.

They continued in a sad possession down the slope towards the cliff that looked out over the lake. Splashpaw set his old mentors body down, and bowed his head. Venomrain and the kits moved to give Splashpaw room to begin digging the grave. But Splashpaw first inspected his fur. He saw no marks on his neck that could be fatal. No one knew how he died...

Splashpaw looked in between his claws, and gasped when he pulled a strand of fur from it. He sniffed. The scent was too stale. He checked his neck again, looking more closely. This time he saw an indent in his neck fur. It was concealed with white pollen. He growled.

"Splashpaw? What are you doing?" Venomrain ventured. Splashpaw turned solemnly to her.

"I know how he died, Venomrain. He was murdered."

*****

They walked into camp just as Nightgaze was calling the clan meeting. The mourning cats looked up expectantly to him, knowing how ill Aquastar was.

"Aquastar has made her choice. I say these words over the spirit of Redstrike, so he may hear and approve of my choice."

Nightgaze paused. Who would it be? Splashpaw settled himself beside Brightshine, wrapping his tail around her thighs subtlety. No one would notice. They were all too intent on learning the new

deputy. Brightshine wrapped hers around him in turn.

"I wonder who it's gonna be?" Brightshine leaned over to whisper to Splashpaw.

Splashpaw swept his gaze over the clan. "Probably Snowtip. She's a great cat..."

Just as he spoke, Nightgaze continued. "Morningshine will be the new deputy of DewClan."

= =

Sorry its so incredibly short guys. But CLIFFHANAHS ROCK! Cx

Warri0r out!
✌

Chapter 20

Splashpaw stared in horror. "No... Anyone but her..." He whispered. His paws shook ever so slightly as the clan called their new deputies name.

"Morningshine! Morningshine!"

Splashpaw forced himself to rumble his sister's name as Morningshine leaped smugly from the great rock and settled herself next to her mate, Fallingfeather. Brightshine pressed a reassuring cheek to his.

"It'll be fine, Splashpaw. You'll see..."

*****

"The time grows near!" The shadowy cat that stood before him growled. "Beware, the lake of blood will grow with every strike! Kits will drown in rivers of endless blood and pain and the clan will be wiped out. Only the ringed tail and the dappled turtle can deliver us from the fatal morning star!"

Splashpaw woke as the bone chilling voice screeched in his ears. He felt sweat running down his face. Nightgaze moved closer. "Splashpaw? Everything alright?"

Splashpaw gulped, trying to hide his fear until he realized his mentor was blind. "Yes. I'm fine. Just... Just a bad dream..." He whispered. Nightgaze grunted and nodded.

"Well, get some sleep. I have a feeling Brightshine's kitting will happen in a few sunrises..." He yawned and curled back up to sleep and within minutes he was snoring gently.

Splashpaw got up quietly. He was growing restless. Every night he dreamed of the prophecy. He knew the horrible time was drawing near. Which meant the clan was in great danger. But he felt he

couldn't tell anyone about the terrible prophecy. He knew the clan would panic. And panic was the real killer.

He stepped outside, pacing the entrance of the den. He couldn't run off with Brightshine, she was too close to kitting. He felt like a caged animal... Trapped in the woven walls of the camp.

He finally stepped up to the great rock and stared up at the stars, watching for the pink wisps of dawn to come.

*****

Splashpaw was curled up on the top of the great rock when he woke. He gave a huge yawn, and suddenly smiled. Today was Hernonkit and Fishkit's ceremony!

He jumped to see Morningshine above him. "Well well well..." she growled softly. Unsheathing her claws, she kicked him over roughly. The sun was only just peeking from the treetops. No one was up.

Splashpaw got up, his eyes sparkling defiantly. "What do you want, Morningshine?" He growled. His eyes bore into hers.

"You are a coward. Running away from me. You *fear* me." She smiled maliciously. "And don't pretend you don't." She growled in his face. "I know your secret..." She whispered and stalked off, leaving Splashpaw to stare at her in horror.

He quickly scrambled down the rock and sat back down, his heart pumping. If Morningshine knew he was mates with Brightshine, why hadn't she told?

Then a horrible thought entered his head. she was waiting for the right time to blackmail...

Chapter 21

Morningshine finished the ceremony. She made herself mentor to Fishpaw, the stronger one. And made Snowtip mentor to Heronkit.

Splashpaw padded numbly to the nursery after the ceremony to check on Brightshine. She was curled up in a ball, her big belly rising and falling gently. He placed a gentle, loving paw on her shoulder, and smiled.

"You and I are safe... Don't worry..." He whispered. He stroked her belly. But suddenly a shadow fell over her sleeping figure and Splashpaw turned, ready to stammer an excuse like, "I was just checking on her kits!"

He saw Nightgaze, his blind eyes wide. "Come quick! Aquastar's stuck in a coughing fit and I need your help!" He ordered. Splashpaw's eyes widened and he raced out of the nursery.

He saw his mother, doubled over in her den, hacking and wheezing nonstop. He watched with horror as his mother's body shook violently with spasms and coughs. He shook his head to clear it and grabbed a wad of camomile. Dipping it with the honeycomb laying beside him, he opened his mother's mouth to place it in, and made her chew. "Swallow!" He commanded, and Aquastar swallowed with pained and tired eyes.

Splashpaw watched in worry as her coughs didn't subside. He looked to Nightgaze for guidance, but he was bowing his head.

"It's in the paws of StarClan, Splashpaw..." He whispered. Splashpaw shivered. He knew his mother had only two lives, and if she lost this one, she may still have the sickness. What would happen if Morningshine became leader?

Then it hit him. Morning*star*. The river of blood will grow with each strike...

Splashpaw heard his mother's coughs die down, and he knew she was losing a life, but he was too shocked to process it. He raced from the den, and ran into the nursery, ignoring Nightgazes bewildered calls. He burst in.

"Brightshine! Lets go for a walk!" He cried, looking her in the eye knowingly. She stared at him, confused for a second, until the worried light in her eyes gave way to knowledge. She got to her paws and waddled after him.

"What happened? Whats wrong?" She whispered after they were out of earshot from the camp. "Is is about the... The prophecy?"

Splashpaw stared, wide eyed at Brightshine. "Morningshine. Brightshine, Aquastar is on her last life, and Morningshine is deputy! Don't you see?!" He paced the forest floor.

"Morningshine is the Morning Star!!!!"

= =

Duhn duhn duhhnnnnnn!!!! Shoutout to whoever guessed it xD im in study hall right now so Ill update until 2:20 central time ^•^

Chapter 22

Brightshine's mouth hung open. "Splashpaw, what do we do? We haven't found the ringed tail or the dappled turtle! How do we save the clan?!"

Splashpaw hung his head. "I don't know. But I do know the Dark Times are fast approaching. We have no time to lose. We must try to find the foreseen saviors."

*****

Nightgaze stepped out of Aquastar's den. His eyes were forlorn. No better than when she had lost her life. He then led Splashpaw to the edge of the camp.

"Splashpaw, it's nearly moonhigh. We need to get ready to go."

Splashpaw was confused. "Go where?"

"You have earned your full medicine cat name," he said. Splashpaw's eyes widened. He purred.

"Nightgaze, I can't wait! Wait till Aquastar hears, she'll be so proud!" His excited tone faded when he caught Nightgaze's sad expression.

"I'm afraid Aquastar isn't in the state of mind to congratulate you, Splashpaw. She is much too sick." He said sadly. "Do you still want to go?"

Splashpaw nodded, all his excitement and anticipation gone. "Yes. I have to do my duty to the clan."

He nodded. "Then we leave at once." and with that, he started to the entrance of the camp.

Splashpaw trotted after him, through the trees and through the ferns, and the undergrowth. Across the river and past the cave he met in with Brightshine. Splashpaw prayed his mentor wouldn't

scent the stale scents of their visits every night, but it seemed Nightgaze was too intent on finding the trail, or he knew about the meetings, just ignoring it. Splashpaw couldn't tell.

They passed the waterfall cave and stepped onto a well worn path, worn from seasons of use. Proceeding that was a steep incline that held rocks, slippery pebbles, and a trickling stream. They followed the stream and came up into a large pool, fed by a trickling waterfall. The waterfall was sparkling even with the night sky, giving it reason for its name, the Starlit Falls.

Nightgaze pointed to the water. "You know the drill, Splashpaw." Splashpaw nodded. He lay in his dip in the cold, hard stone, and lapped up the icy water in the pool. Almost at once he felt a tickling sensation, and his eyes drooped as the icy water trickled down his throat. His heart fluttered. He was whirling away to StarClan. *What will they tell me? Will they help me find the saviors?*

Splashpaw opened his eyes in a grassy field, his head spinning. Starry cats surrounded him, moving in sync, staring with glowing eyes at him. "The time draws near... The time draws near! Splashpaw, the time draws near! We must give you your name for you to fulfill your destiny!" They moved in closer. Each cat touched their nose to his body. Splashpaw felt a surge of overwhelming energy flowing through his veins. He winced.

The cats lifted him off the ground. They began to float, and the wind pulled through Splashpaw's fur, and he closed his eyes, basking in the wonderful feeling of StarClan.

"Splashflight..." The cats whispered in an almost blood chilling unison. "Splashflight is the name we give you. For you will fly through the stars like no other. Splashflight..." The starry cats whispered, and then Splashflight was falling, and all went dark.

Chapter 23

Splashflight woke, his head spinning. Nightgaze was sitting at the entrance, waiting for him. He turned his head as Splashflight padded up to him.

"StarClan has made their choice?"

Splashflight nodded. "They call me Splashflight now." He said quietly. Nightgaze nodded.

"Alright then. Let's go, Splashflight."

Splashflight moved alongside his mentor, and he heard whispers in his ears.

"Splashflight... Splashflight... Go, go fulfill your destiny. Brightshine needs you. The lemur and the turtle have come..." They whispered. Suddenly Splashflight felt a feeling of dread deep in the pit of his stomach. He raced ahead.

"Splashflight! Splashflight whats going on?!" Nightgaze was yelling. Splashflight ignored him. He kept running. He could hear the screams of the clan in the camp. He heard Brightshines yowls of begging.

"No! No don't kill him! Please!!" She was begging. Splashflight raced ahead faster. He finally broke into the camp, and stood in horror. He saw Brightshine, her tail desperately wrapped around two kits. She was staring pleadingly at Morningshine, holding a third tom kit, and growling.

Splashflight ran up ahead, stepping between Morningshine and Brightshine. Staring at Morningshine, he growled. "Put my son down!!" He screamed.

Morningshine smiled evilly. "*Your* son? But you're a medicine cat? *Surely* that means you cannot serve as medicine cat anymore?" She

said, her eyes sparkling with satisfaction and mock pity. Splashflight growled. He wasn't giving her the satisfaction of seeing how broken he was inside. Not anymore.

"Why are you doing this?"

Morningshine smiled. "Easy. He is weak. And as leader, my word is law!" She slammed a paw down on the tiny kit's head. Brightshine screamed.

"NO!" She screeched. Fishpaw and Heronpaw moved forward to restrain her at Morningshine's command, their eyes stony.

Splashflight narrowed his eyes as Morningshine's words sank in. Suddenly there was no sound but the pained whimpers of Brightshine as she mourned. "Leader?"

Morningshine nodded with an evil smile. "Aquastar died this morning." Yowls of protest rippled through the clan and Morningshine turned with a growl before continuing. "I am now to be addressed to as Morningstar!" She said. One yowl broke out above them all.

"NO!" Dawnmist yowled at the top of her lungs, stepping out of the crowd. She was staring at her sister, her eyes hard.

Morningstar turned. "What did you say, Dawnmist?" She said cooly, in a dangerously honey coated voice. Splashflight held his breath as Morningstar crept closer to her sister.

"I said no, Morningstar. I cannot bear to watch you do this. You killed your own leader and my mother. You killed that kit! You are NOT the sister I once had," she said firmly, raising her chin. "And I will *not* be deputy to a clan like this. Not while you rule!" Splashflight stood, open mouthed.

Morningstar was staring, infuriated at her sister. He eyes were narrowed in anger. "You dare confront me? I will make DewClan great!" She said in a low growl. Then, without warning, she leaped at Dawnmist, catching her in the neck. Dawnmist let out a yelp of surprise before Morningstar slammed a paw down on her sister's

skull, cracking it to pieces and splattering her blood on the dusty forest floor.

"And *no one* will dare stand in my way!" Morningstar finished, kicking dust over her sisters still and lifeless body.

Splashflight watched in horror, standing close beside Brightshine and his kits as Morningstar leaped up to the top of the Highrock.

"From this moment forward, DewClan will be great. We will not be stupid cowards that hide in the trees. We will fight! I will change our ways. From this day on, we will be BloodClan of the mighty forest!"

END OF BOOK ONE